

# Understanding the Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Veteran Homelessness

October 29, 2015





# Panelists

- **Richard Cho**, Deputy Director, USICH
- **Marcy Thompson**, Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs, HUD
- **Keith Harris**, National Director of Clinical Operations, VA
- **Beverley Ebersold**, Director of National Initiatives, USICH



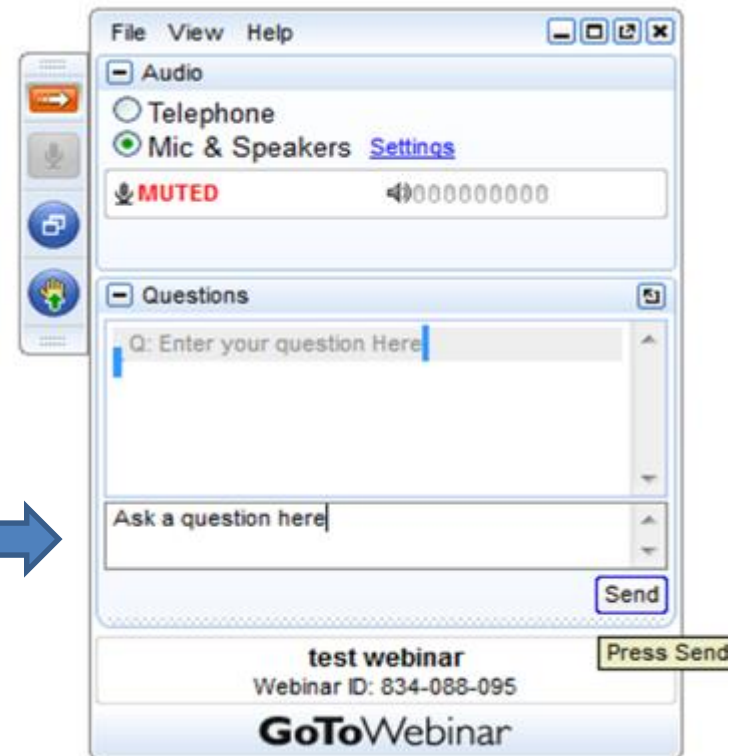
# Webinar Format

- This webinar will last 60 minutes.
- Due to the relatively high number of participants, you are in “listen only mode.”
- Webinar slides and recording will be available on [usich.gov](http://usich.gov) and emailed to all registrants.
- Resources will be provided at the end.



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# Webinar Agenda

- Importance of Good Measures
- What it Means to End Homelessness
- Criteria and Benchmarks
- Strategies for Communities
- Federal Confirmation Process



# Importance of Good Measures

- Measures/metrics reflect values:
  - We should measure what we care about.
- Lessons from behavioral economics:
  - People will adjust behavior based on the metrics they're held against.
  - Anything you measure will impel a person to optimize his score on that metric.

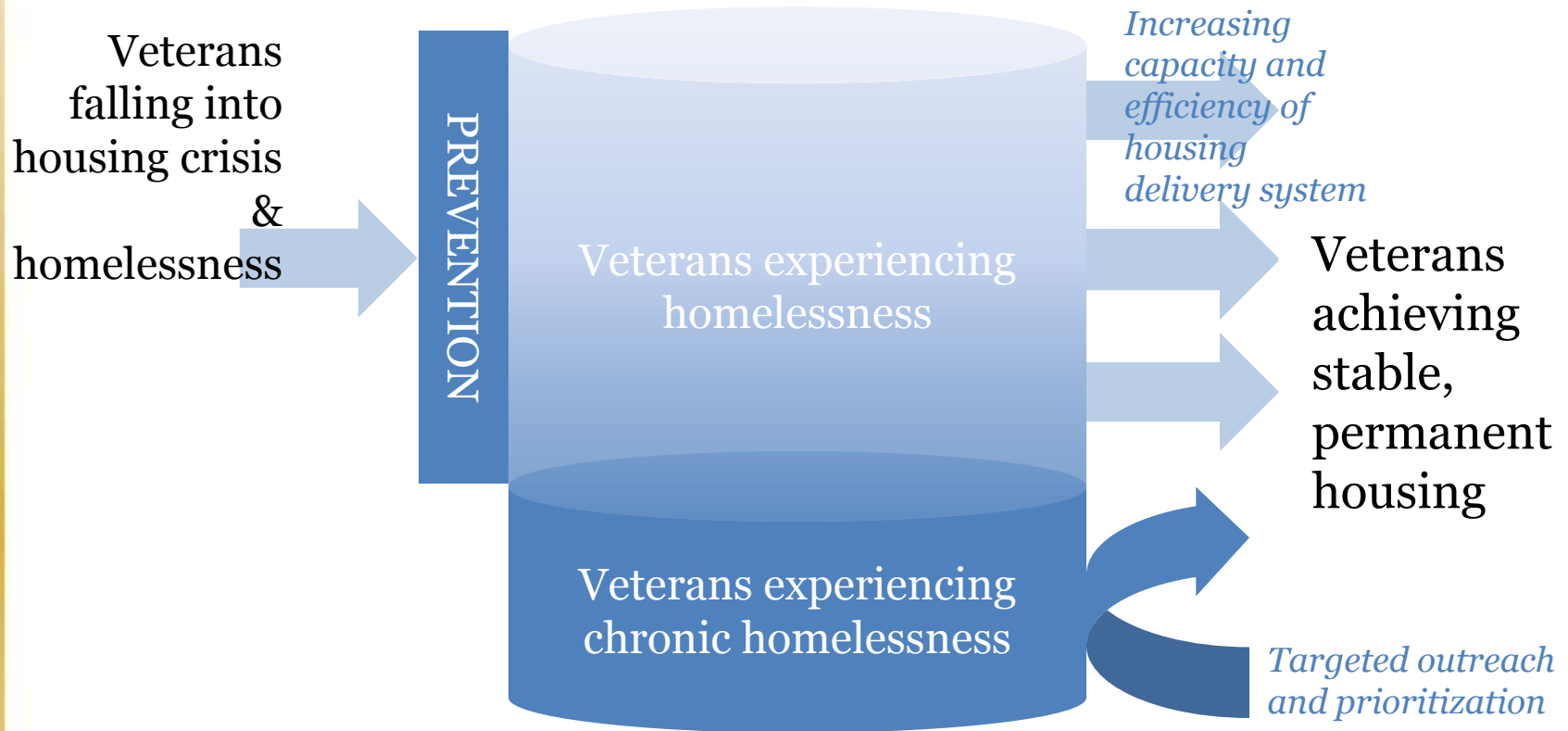


# Importance of Good Measures (continued)

- Measures sometimes lead to unintended negative consequences:
  - If we measure only **unsheltered** rates among Veterans, this could lead to the creation of more shelter beds.
  - If we measure only the **volume** of placements, this could lead to housing placements of Veterans in poor quality housing.
  - If we measure only the **speed** of placements, this could result in the neglect of more vulnerable or high-need Veterans.



# Dynamics of Homelessness







# An End to Homelessness Defined

**An end to homelessness does not mean that no one will ever experience a housing crisis again.** Changing economic realities, the unpredictability of life, and unsafe or unwelcoming family environments may create situations where individuals, families, or youth could experience or be at risk of homelessness.

An end to homelessness means that every community will have a **systematic response** in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.



# Criteria and Benchmarks for an End to Veteran Homelessness

- On October 1, 2015, USICH published revised criteria and benchmarks that communities can use to determine whether they have achieved an end to Veteran homelessness
- **Criteria:** asks whether communities have put a system in place to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring
- **Benchmarks:** measures whether or not that system is working effectively and efficiently



# Federal Criteria

Rev. 10/1/2015

1. The community has identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness
  - Identified, enumerated, engaged
  
2. The community provides shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it
  - Sufficient shelter capacity for any unsheltered Veteran who wants it, without unnecessary conditions



## Federal Criteria, continued

3. The community only provides service-intensive transitional housing in limited instances
  - Used only when Veteran prefers prior to PH placement; priority placed on using TH as short-term bridge
4. The community has capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing
  - Sufficient PH for all homeless Veterans (incl. those who choose TH); ability to assist Veterans to move into PH quickly and without barriers to entry, using Housing First approaches



## Federal Criteria, continued

5. The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.
  - Resources, plans, and system capacity in place for identifying (1) Veterans entering or returning to homelessness in the future, and (2) Veterans at risk of homelessness.
    - Routinely use multiple data sources and conduct comprehensive outreach and engagement to identify such Veterans.
    - Adequate resources and capacity to prevent homelessness when possible.
    - Adequate resources and appropriate plans and services to promote the long-term housing stability for Vets who have entered permanent housing.



# Federal Benchmarks

Rev 10/1/2015

## A. Chronic homelessness among Veterans has been ended

- No Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness, with exception of (1) any Veterans identified, offered PH intervention, but not yet accepted or entered housing, and (2) any Veterans offered PH intervention but chose service-intensive transitional housing prior to PH.
- Continued outreach to Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness that have not yet accepted PH intervention offer.
- Continue to offer PH intervention at least once every two weeks.



# Federal Benchmarks, continued

## B. Veterans have quick access to permanent housing

- Average time identification to PH entry 90 days or less among all Veterans who entered PH in past three months
- Two exceptions/exclusions: (1) Veterans identified and offered PH intervention, but not initially accepted offer, average only includes time from PH intervention acceptance until PH move-in, and (2) Veterans offered PH intervention but chose to enter service-intensive transitional housing prior to moving to PH
- Should also take into account, and may need to be tailored based on, local housing market conditions



# Federal Benchmarks, continued

- C. The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity
    - Number of Veterans moving into PH is greater than or equal to number entering homelessness during continuous 90 day period preceding benchmark measurement
  
  - D. The community is committed to Housing First and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances
    - Number of Veterans entering service-intensive TH is less than number entering homelessness during continuous 90 day period preceding benchmark measurement
- 
- Specifications for benchmarks: rev 10/8/2015
  - Updates will occur periodically





## Strategies for Benchmark A: *Chronic homelessness among Veterans has been ended*

- Prioritization in HUD-VASH and other permanent housing options
- Improving collaborative identification and outreach
- Persistent, assertive, and creative engagement
- Creation of an active list that identifies all Veterans experiencing homelessness



## Strategies for Benchmark B: Veterans have quick access to permanent housing & Benchmark C: The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity

- Reducing HUD-VASH processing times
- Improving rapid re-housing performance
- Leveraging mainstream and non-VA housing assistance
- Implementing short-term “surge” activities (e.g. 100 day housing placement challenges)
- Improving housing search and landlord engagement



Strategies for Benchmark D: *The community is committed to Housing First and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances*

- Critically examine need for service-intensive transitional housing
- Change program models to “bridge housing”
- Convert service-intensive transitional housing to permanent housing models where appropriate



# Federal Confirmation Process

To begin the confirmation process:

- Download the [Criteria, Benchmarks, and Specifications](#)
- Contact any one of the following Federal reps and request sample template:
  - HUD Field Office
  - HUD Regional Administrator
  - Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) Homeless Coordinator
  - VA Medical Center
  - USICH Regional Coordinator
- Gather requested data and complete template
- Submit request to your primary Federal representative to initiate Interagency review



# Federal Confirmation Process, cont'd.

## Interagency Review Team:

- USICH, HUD, VA representatives
- Reviews confirmation requests
- This may include clarifying questions, requests for additional data to clarify
- Outcome of review is provided to community
  - If confirmed: Federal government issues formal confirmation letter and offers to coordinate w/ community on announcement & messaging
  - If not confirmed: Federal partners are available to offer guidance and technical assistance to help address the issues raised in the review

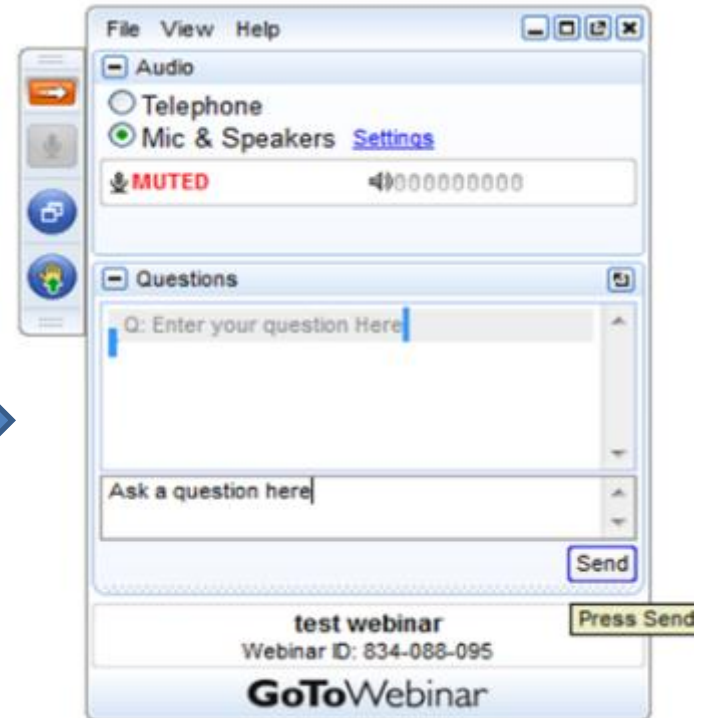


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# Resources

- Achieving an End to Veteran Homelessness: [Criteria and Benchmarks](#)
- SNAPS In Focus: [What it Means to End Veteran Homelessness](#)
- Data Sharing: [VA Guidance on HMIS Access](#)
- Strategies to End Veteran Homelessness: [Vets@Home Toolkits](#)
- [10 Strategies to End Veteran Homelessness](#) (USICH Resource)



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